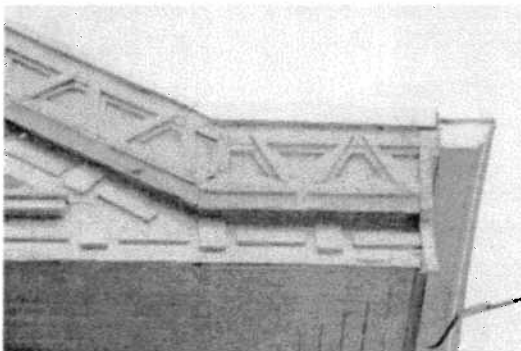
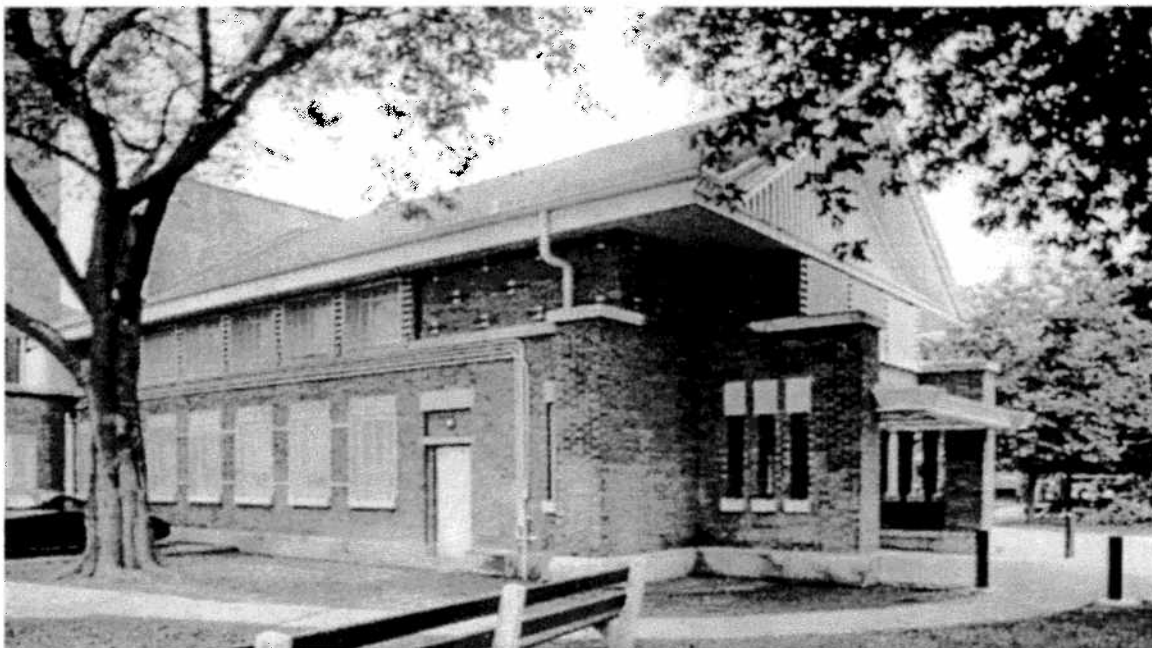


# LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT



## **Shedd Park Fieldhouse**

**3660 West 23rd Street**

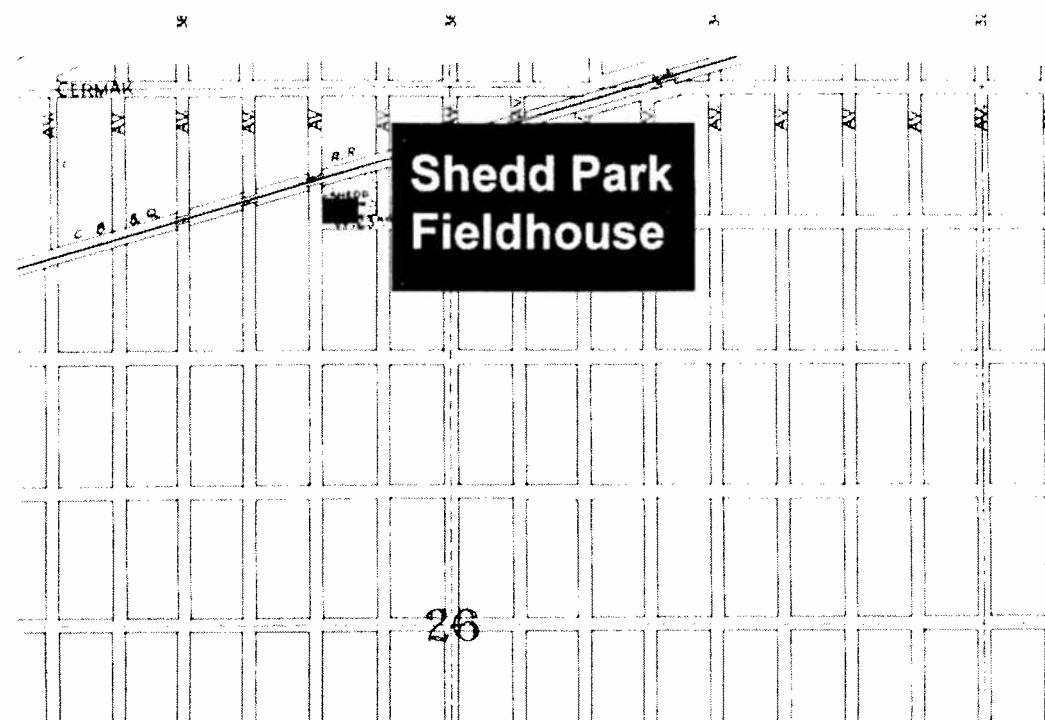
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**Preliminary Landmark recommendation approved by  
the Commission on Chicago Landmarks, July 10, 2003**



**CITY OF CHICAGO  
Richard M. Daley, Mayor**

**Department of Planning and Development  
Alicia Mazur Berg, Commissioner**



## SHEDD PARK FIELDHOUSE

### 3660 WEST 23<sup>RD</sup> STREET

**BUILT:** 1916-17  
1928 (GYMNASIUM ADDITION)

**ARCHITECTS:** WILLIAM DRUMMOND  
MICHAELSEN AND ROGNSTAD (GYMNASIUM  
ADDITION)

**Cover:** The Shedd Park Fieldhouse is a handsome Prairie-style building (top). The building includes a wooden fascia with a geometric pattern of ornamentation (bottom left) and a second-floor auditorium (bottom right).

**Above:** The Shedd Park Fieldhouse is located in the South Lawndale neighborhood on Chicago's Southwest Side.

The Commission on Chicago Landmarks, whose nine members are appointed by the Mayor, was established in 1968 by city ordinance. The Commission is responsible for recommending to the City Council which individual buildings, sites, objects, or districts should be designated as Chicago Landmarks, which protects them by law.

The landmark designation process begins with a staff study and a preliminary summary of information related to the potential designation criteria. The next step is a preliminary vote by the landmarks commission as to whether the proposed landmark is worthy of consideration. This vote not only initiates the formal designation process, but it places the review of city permits for the property under the jurisdiction of the Commission until a final landmark recommendation is acted on by the City Council.

This Landmark Designation Report is subject to possible revision and amendment during the designation process. Only language contained within the designation ordinance adopted by the City Council should be regarded as final.

Chicago's park system constitutes one of the city's most important historic resources with its combination of significant landscapes and buildings. Shedd Park, located on Chicago's Southwest Side, contains one of the city's finest fieldhouses, a significant building type in the history of the city. The neighborhood fieldhouse exemplifies a period in park design and programming—the creation of neighborhood parks and playgrounds in working-class neighborhoods early in the twentieth century—that is significant not only to Chicago, but to the nation's history as well.

The Shedd Park Fieldhouse is also significant for its architectural style. The building is an excellent example of Prairie-style architecture and is one of the most architecturally significant fieldhouses located in Chicago's park system. Built in 1916-17 and typical of Prairie School architecture, the fieldhouse is a long, horizontal building with deep overhanging eaves. Its significant interior spaces include a fine auditorium with an open gable ceiling. A sensitively realized gymnasium was added in 1928 and repeats the horizontal massing, materials and detailing of the original building.

realized gymnasium was added in 1928 and repeats the horizontal massing, materials and detailing of the original building.

The original Shedd Park Fieldhouse is the work of architect William Eugene Drummond. Drummond was a protégée of Frank Lloyd Wright, internationally recognized as the principal innovator of the Prairie style. Working both alone and in partnership with Louis Guenzel, Drummond is considered one of the city's most skilled designers in the Prairie School tradition, and the Shedd Park Fieldhouse is one of his best works.

The Shedd Park Fieldhouse's 1928 addition was designed by the architectural firm of Michaelsen and Rognstad. Michaelsen and Rognstad worked well in a wide variety of architectural styles and were the architects for the West Park Commission from 1927 to 1929. They also designed the On Leong Merchants' Association Building, a designated Chicago Landmark.



The original 1917 Shedd Park Fieldhouse.

## PARK DEVELOPMENT IN CHICAGO AND THE NEIGHBORHOOD FIELDHOUSE

Park development in Chicago displays a rich variety of traditions. In the first half of the nineteenth century, in an effort to provide a physical amenity for newly platted residential neighborhoods and to encourage sales, Chicago real estate developers set aside small tracts of land for parks in several neighborhoods intended for upper-income houses. The first of these parks, Washington Square, was given to the City in 1842 by the American Land Company, which was subdividing the surrounding Near North Side area. Other parks acquired in the next 30 years by the City through gifts of land from developers included Union Park and Vernon Park on Chicago's West Side and Ellis Park on the city's South Side. These parks were relatively modest in size and intended for strolling and passive recreation by nearby residents. In overall form and use they resembled small residential parks or "squares" found both in European cities as well in older American cities such as Boston, Philadelphia, and New York.

The value of parks as enhancements to real estate development and civic life continued to be recognized in the years after the Civil War. In 1869 the Illinois state legislature established three new governmental agencies to oversee the development and maintenance of new parks in Chicago and neighboring suburban townships. The creation of the South Park, West Park, and Lincoln Park Commissions brought about the enhancement of the already-created Lincoln Park on the city's north lakefront and the creation of five additional large parks, connected by landscaped boulevards, on the city's West and South sides.

These parks—Lincoln, Humboldt, Garfield, Douglas, Washington, and Jackson Parks—were designed as large-scale "pastoral" landscapes of picturesque meadows, encircling woodlands, curvilinear ponds and meandering bridal paths. They were meant to both encourage nearby real estate development and to provide recreational opportunities for people living throughout the Chicago area. Their designs were influenced by the naturalistic English landscape tradition of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century development of large, park-like cemeteries such as Boston's Mount Auburn Cemetery and Chicago's Graceland Cemetery. The two South Park Commission's parks, Washington and Jackson, were the creation of Frederick Law Olmstead, America's leading 19<sup>th</sup>-century landscape architect. Olmstead's earlier design for New York's Central Park, designed and constructed in the 1850s and 1860s, was widely admired and was the prototype 19<sup>th</sup>-century park on which Chicago's large-scale parks were based.

Unfortunately, Chicago's great pastoral parks were located at some distance from most of the city's working-class neighborhoods. By the early 1900s, social reformers were advocating a new kind of park, attuned to what were perceived as the specific needs of members of Chicago's poor, largely immigrant working class, for whom the existing large parks were inaccessible. Progressives such as architect Dwight Perkins and sociologist Charles Zueblin saw the need for small parks within poor neighborhoods, easily available to working-class families. They also believed that the emphasis in these neighborhood parks should be on active

recreation, such as swimming, gymnastics, and ball playing, and supervised play, rather than walking and passive recreation.

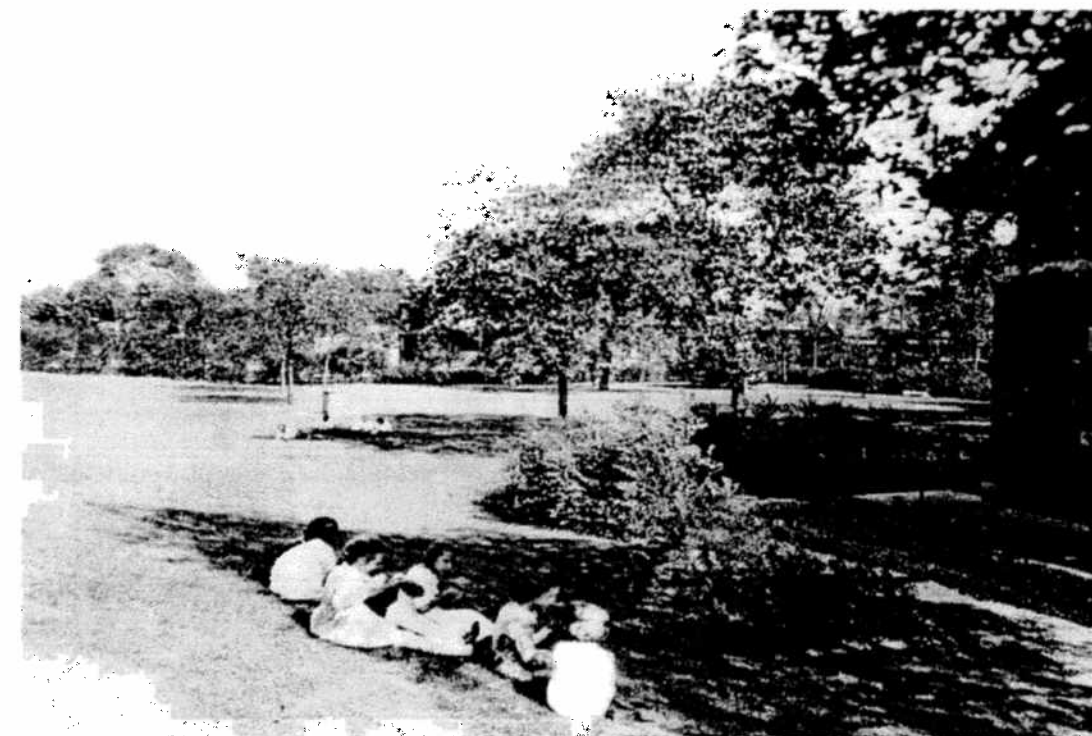
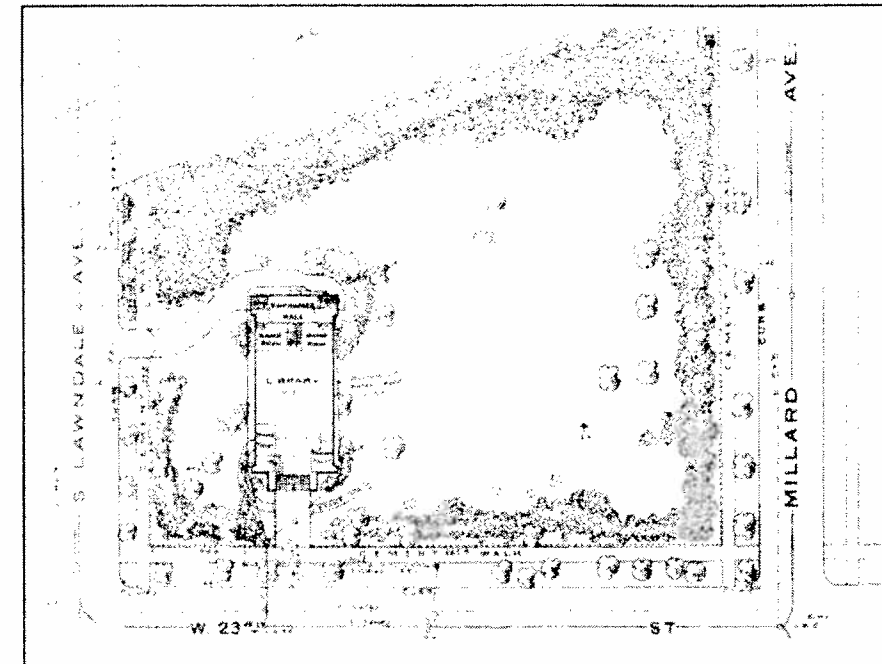
In 1899, the Special Park Commission was established by the City of Chicago to assess the city's parks and to make and implement recommendations for improvements in existing parks and the creation of new parks. Although subsequent funding prevented the Special Park Commission from actively acquiring land and developing parks itself, the Commission's recommendations, published in 1904, called for the creation of numerous neighborhood parks throughout the city. The first neighborhood parks, led by the 1900 construction of McKinley Park, were built on Chicago's South and Southwest Sides by the South Park Commission and were hailed for their innovative social programs and designs. Soon the Lincoln Park and West Park Commissions followed suit.

At the heart of these neighborhood parks was a new institutional building – the “fieldhouse.” As this building type had never existed before, there were no specific models for designers to follow. The result was that the overall architectural appearance of the fieldhouse complexes varied among the park commissions, but the program elements were similar. Loosely based on settlement house buildings, park fieldhouses were intended to become the physical focus of recreational activity in neighborhood parks, housing activities as varied as drama, English classes, and weight-lifting, and to become de facto community centers in working-class Chicago neighborhoods. The fieldhouses contained assembly halls and club rooms, indoor gymnasiums and locker rooms. They often had libraries and lunchrooms, and in some cases there was an outdoor swimming pool either as part of the building complex or located with shower rooms in another section of the park.

## HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION OF THE SHEDD PARK FIELDHOUSE

Shedd Park's history reflects both the earliest trends in Chicago park development – that of “set-aside” parks intended to enhance real estate development – and early 20<sup>th</sup> century construction of fieldhouses. Trapezoidal in shape, Shedd Park is located in the South Lawndale neighborhood and is bounded on the south by 23<sup>rd</sup> Street, by Millard Avenue on the east, Lawndale Avenue on the west and the viaduct of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad tracks on the north. It was first conceived as a private park for the A. C. Millard and E. J. Decker subdivision, originally platted in 1875 as a railroad suburb located on the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad. This subdivision was further developed in the 1880s by businessman and philanthropist John G. Shedd who built a large brick Queen Anne-style residence for himself at 2316 South Millard Avenue in 1888, a half block south of Shedd Park. He lived here until 1906 when he moved to a newly built twenty-two room Gothic mansion at 4515 South Drexel Boulevard in the fashionable Kenwood neighborhood.

To further enhance the Millard and Decker subdivision and its property values, Shedd reserved 1.13 acres for what was initially called “Shedd's Park.” Although Shedd intended to improve



**Top: Plan of Shedd Park from a 1918 drawing. The plan shows the fieldhouse before the 1928 addition of a rear gymnasium. Shedd Park is located in the South Lawndale community area and is bounded by 23rd Street on the south, Millard Avenue on the east, Lawndale Avenue on the west, and the viaduct of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy railroad on the north. Bottom: A historic view of Shedd Park showing the park's original 1917 fieldhouse in the far right of the photograph.**



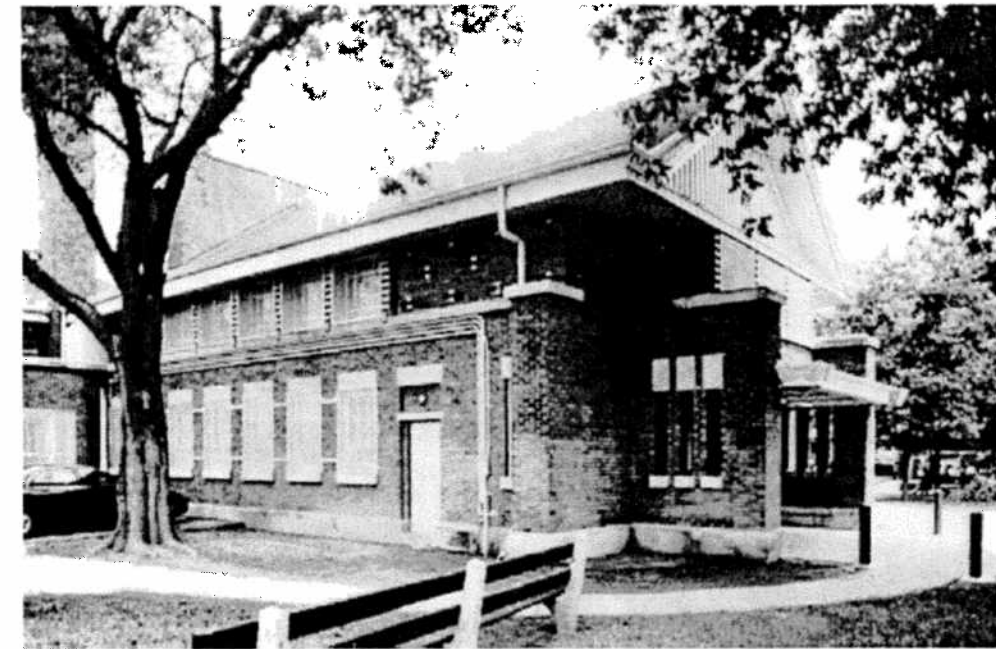
what was then a private park through a local assessment, his neighbors did not want to be taxed, and they suggested that it should be made a public park. In 1888, he sold the site to the City, reserving a small lot on the park's north side for the construction of a Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad station. Ten years later the City transferred the unimproved park to the West Chicago Board of Park Commissioners, commonly known as the West Park Commission, which operated parks on the City's West Side. Shortly thereafter, the railroad delivered, free of charge, 196 carloads of soil for planted slopes to screen the train tracks. Later Shedd helped the park commissioners gain title to the train station lot in 1914, the building was demolished, and the land was added to the park.

In 1916, likely based on the recommendation of landscape architect and West Parks Commission Superintendent Jens Jensen, the West Park Commission hired Prairie School architect William Drummond to design a fieldhouse for the park. As Jensen had vigorously campaigned for Prairie-style buildings in his re-design of the City's larger West Side parks, he was also instrumental in having the fieldhouses in the smaller neighborhood parks designed in the same manner. Construction began shortly, and the Forty-Ninth Annual Report of the West Chicago Park Commissioners (1917) reported that the Shedd Park Fieldhouse, to cost \$28,651, was nearly complete and would include a stage for dramatics, musicals, and dances, plus a small branch of the Chicago Public Library. The building was opened to the public in January, 1918.

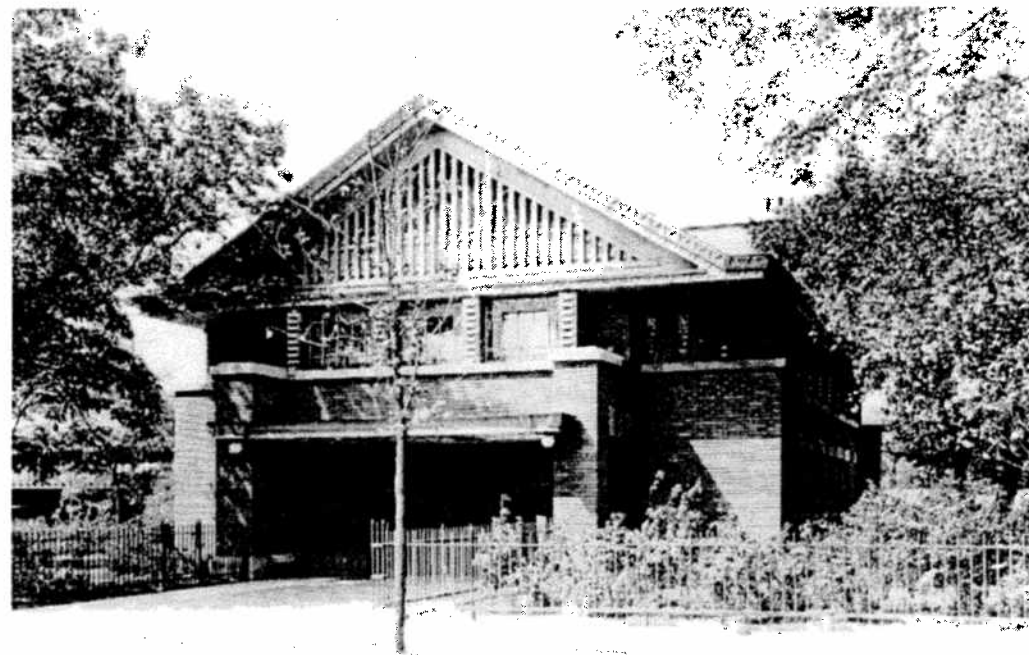
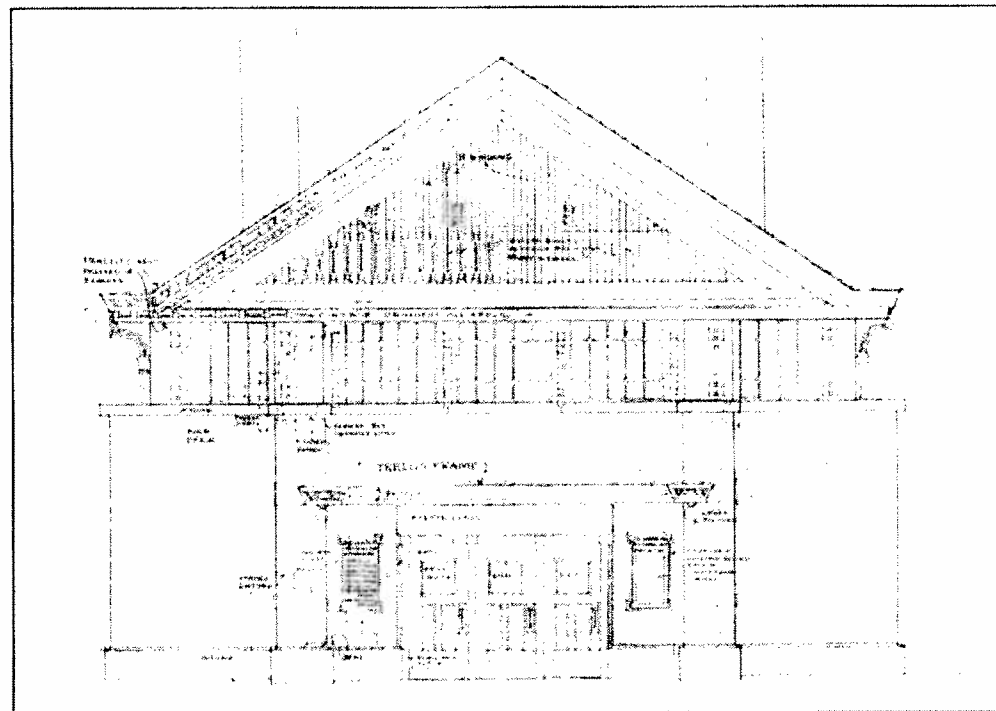
In 1927, reflecting the nation's tremendous economic prosperity, the West Park Commission received approval of a \$10,000,000 bond issuance for a major improvement program in its parks. Although a majority of this funding was devoted to the construction of large, ornate buildings in Humboldt, Garfield and Douglas Parks, Shedd Park benefited as well, receiving \$65,550 for a gymnasium addition to the original Drummond-designed park fieldhouse. The architectural firm of Michaelson and Rognstad, architects for the West Park Commission from 1927 to 1929, skillfully designed the addition to the fieldhouse in 1928 which incorporated the original building's Prairie-style design.

The Shedd Park Fieldhouse is an exceptional example of Prairie-style design and craftsmanship, an architectural style not commonly seen in the Chicago Park District. The Prairie style is one of the few indigenous American styles, developed by an unusually creative group of Chicago architects at the turn of the twentieth century. The building has a sense of broad horizontality associated with the Prairie style and a symmetry that gives the structure a visually impressive appearance well-suited for a public building.

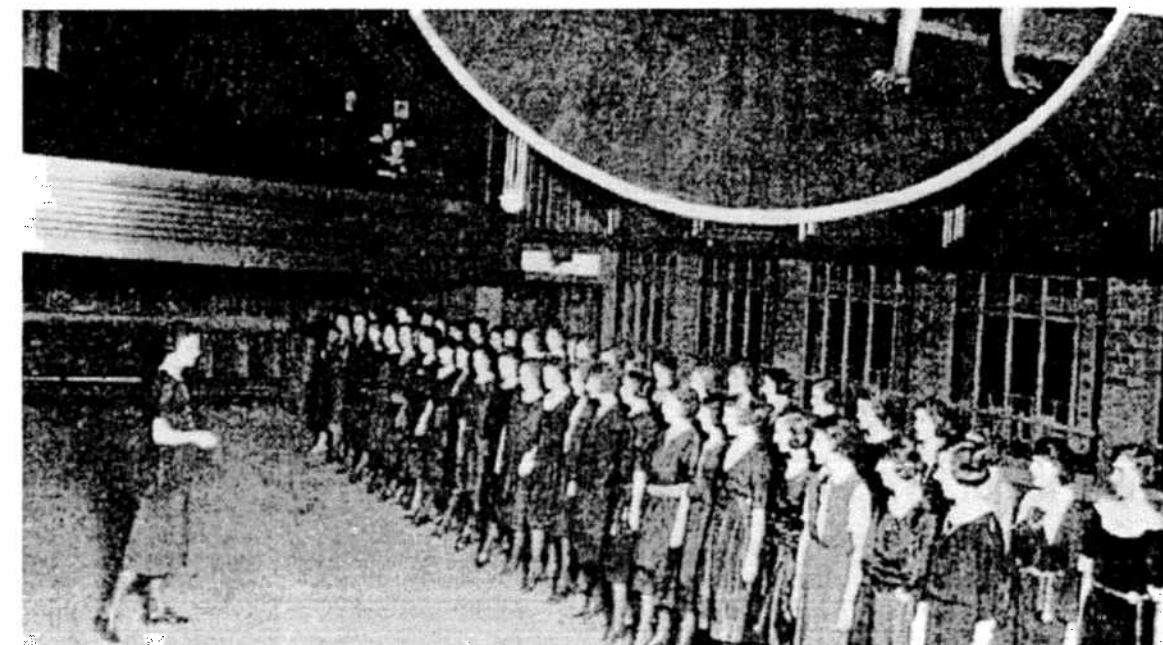
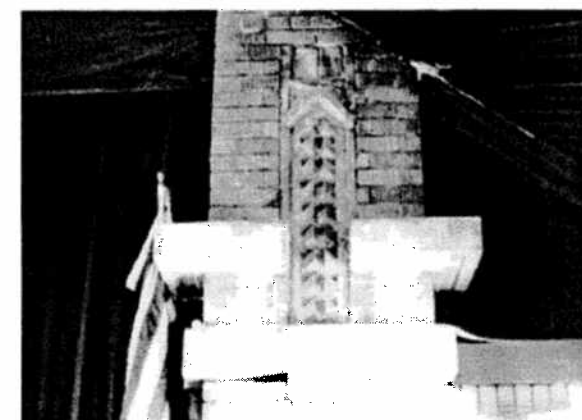
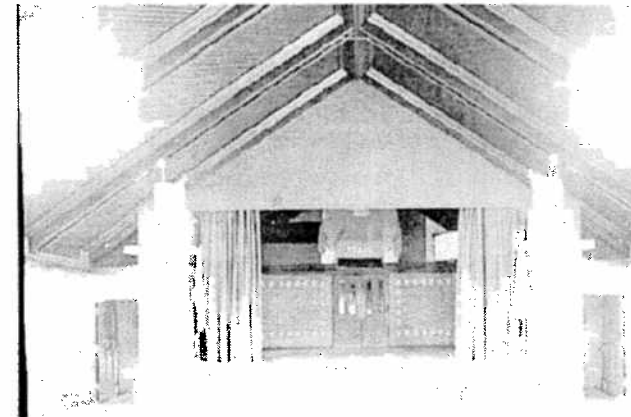
The Shedd Park Fieldhouse is a rectangular, two-story brick building orientated in a north-south direction set on a concrete foundation. Walls are of rough textured brown brick with incised mortar joints. Indiana limestone is used for trim at the base of the wall, for lintels and sills of the first story windows and for a string course at the second story level. A medium pitched gable roof with broad eaves characteristic of the Prairie style covers the building. The roof was originally covered in Spanish tile, but is now sheathed in asphalt shingles. Two chimneys joined by a parapet wall rise above the roof near the north end of the building. Horizontal bands of windows, double-hung on the first floor and casement on second floor (all now covered with



Top: The southeast corner of the Shedd Park Fieldhouse as it appears today.  
Bottom: The same view in a historic photograph. Note how the 1928 gymnasium addition (left portion of building) carefully blends with the design of the original structure.



Top: Architect William Drummond's drawing of the south elevation of the Shedd Park Fieldhouse. Bottom: The same view in a 1920 photograph.



Top and middle: The Shedd Park Fieldhouse auditorium and a detail of an auditorium stage pier displaying Prairie-style ornament. Bottom: A dance class in the auditorium, c.1920s.

diagonal metal security screens), give the building an added sense of the Prairie style, as does emphasis on the building's corners through the use of masonry piers.

The building's principal decorative features include an ornamented roof pediment above its south entrance. The pediment's fascia and all eaves are trimmed with decorative woodwork in a triangular pattern. A pattern of vertical woodwork appears in the pediment's tympanum. Originally thin clear glass windows were set between the tympanum's vertical members, but they are now no longer visible. A wooden trellis ornamented by decorative rectangular panels at its corners is located above the building's south entrance.

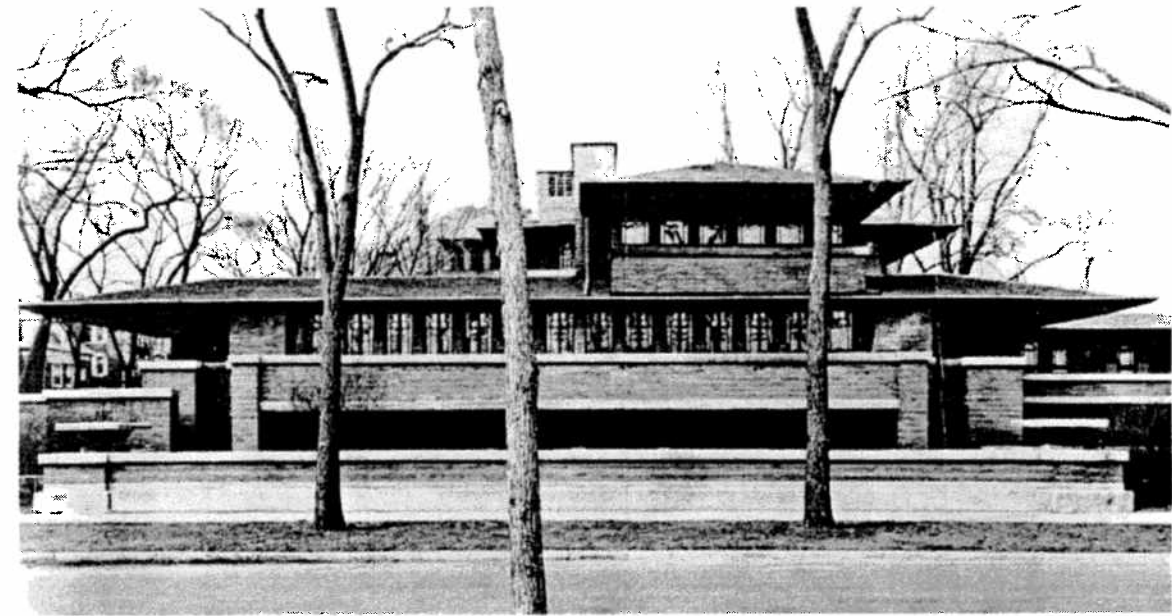
Entry to the building is through a triple set of doors into a vestibule containing washroom facilities and a stairway to the second floor. Vestibule walls are of the same face brick as the exterior. The central portion of the ground floor, originally a branch library, is now an activities room with a small staff office. To the north are two small meeting rooms and a hallway with two stairways leading up to a second floor auditorium. The auditorium, the fieldhouse's most significant interior space, runs the length of the building (north-south). The space is distinguished by exposed common brick walls and an open gabled roof sheathed with varnished diagonal decking between the roof beams. The auditorium's stage, located at the north end of the building, is flanked by decorative piers which display a simple pattern of Prairie-style ornament. A small balcony seating sixty people is located at the south end of the auditorium.

The smaller 1928 gymnasium addition to the fieldhouse is located just behind (north) and slightly to the west of the original building. Also designed in the Prairie style, but at a date after the style had passed from fashion, the addition respects the original fieldhouse in details, materials and massing. The gymnasium is a two-story, roughly square structure covered by a hip roof with wide eaves. As in the case of the original fieldhouse, the addition's roof was originally covered by Spanish tiles, but now is covered by asphalt shingles. The building's dark brick closely resembles that of the original fieldhouse, and the addition repeats the limestone sills, lintels and stringcourse of the earlier building. The building's fascia also repeats the triangular detailing of the original building.

The Shedd Park Fieldhouse has been previously recognized for its architectural significance. The building has been individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is included in the AIA Guide to Chicago. The building is also included in the Chicago Historic Resources Survey where it was color-coded orange.

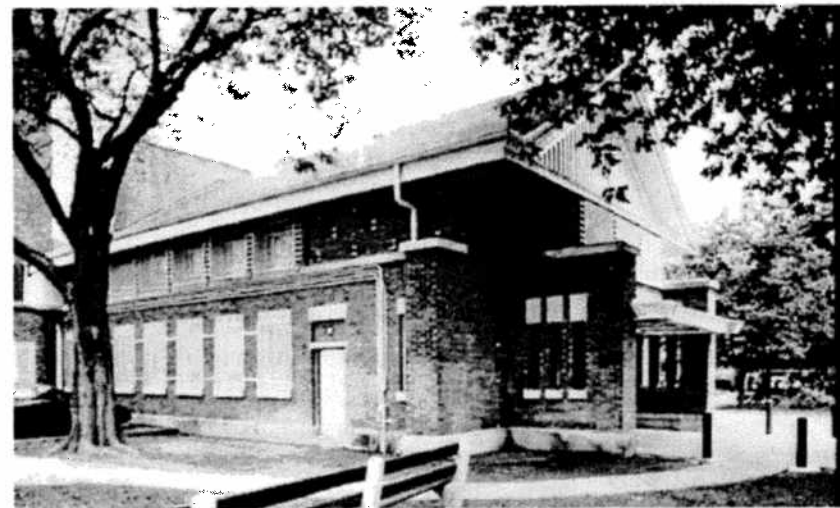
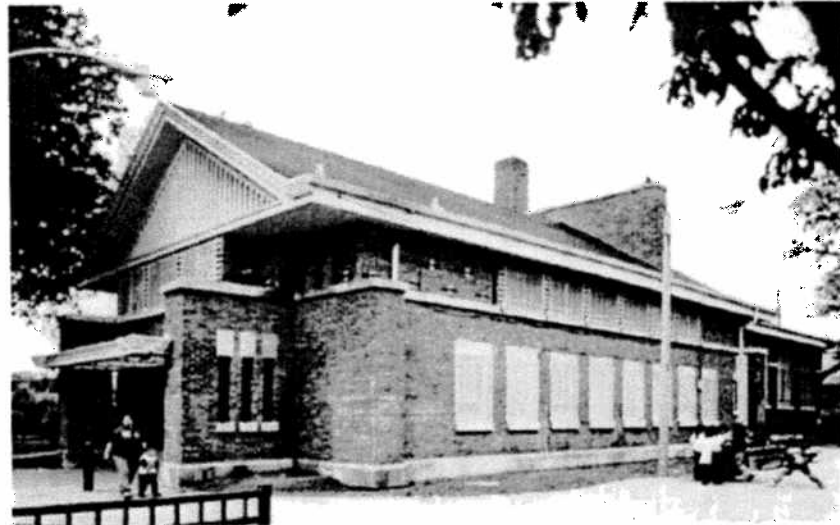
## THE PRAIRIE STYLE

The innovative Prairie style was developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century by internationally recognized architect Frank Lloyd Wright and other architects as "a modern architecture for a democratic American society." The Prairie style was a revolutionary movement in architecture which, though regionally based in the Chicago area, had a major impact throughout the world. The core concept of the movement was that of creating organic, aesthetically and functionally unified structures from inorganic parts, and to imbue structures with

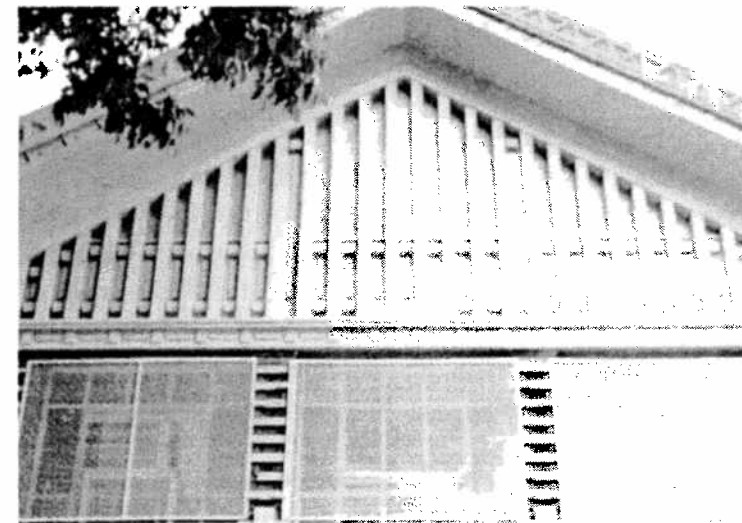
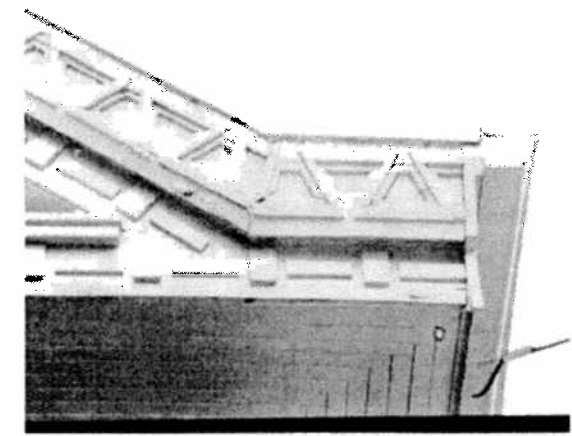
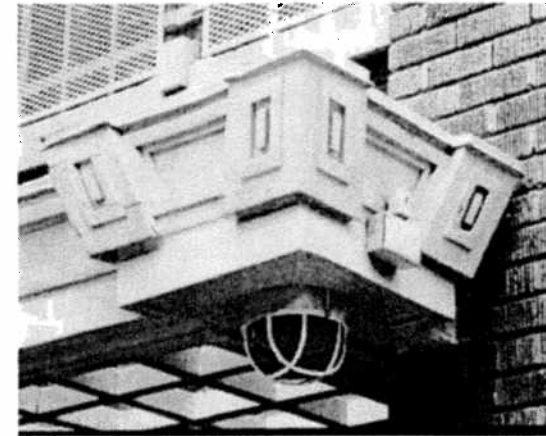


**Top: Chicago's Robie House, one of the landmark buildings of the Prairie style, designed by the acknowledged originator of the style, Frank Lloyd Wright. Bottom: The Brookfield Kindergarten, designed in the Prairie style by William Drummond, a protege of Wright and architect of the Shedd Park Fieldhouse. Both buildings share the Prairie style's emphasis on horizontality, its use of low roofs with broadly projecting eaves, ribbon windows, simple geometric shapes, and brick or plaster over wood frame construction.**

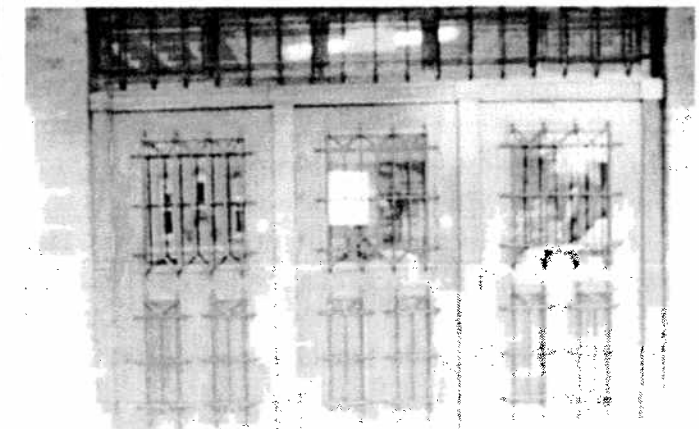
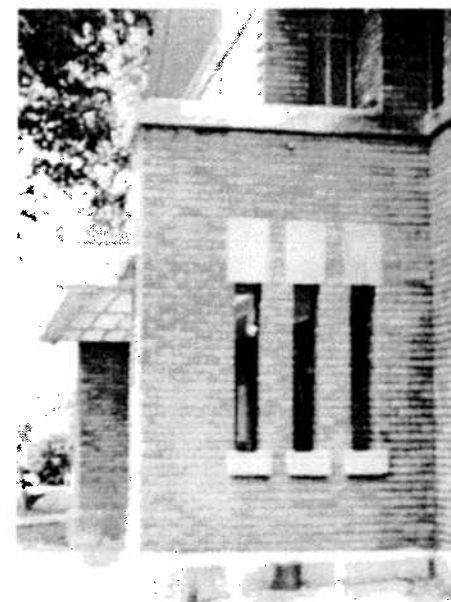




The Shedd Park Fieldhouse is a fine example of the Prairie style. Top to bottom: Southeast, southwest and northeast corners of the fieldhouse. The 1928 gymnasium addition is visible on the right in the bottom photograph.



The exterior of the Shedd Park Fieldhouse has handsome Prairie style details executed in wood, brick and stone. Top left and right: Trellis and fascia details; middle: Roof pediment; bottom left: Entrance piers; bottom right: Entrance doors.





a sense of visual dynamism that was not beholden to historic architectural styles. The style was dependent on the careful integration of all aspects of design: plan, site, space, elevation, materials, finishes and texture.

Architect Louis Sullivan initially nurtured this philosophy in the expressionism of his late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century architecture. A group of "second-generation" architects, many of whom had trained in his office, including Frank Lloyd Wright and his followers such as William Eugene Drummond, used Sullivan's personal theory as a point of departure for their own designs. Although there are distinguishing characteristics in the works of each of these designers, it is important to note that they all shared an antipathy for historical references in architecture. They believed that reliance on previous designs implied pre-ordained notions of what a building should look like.

The Prairie style was genuinely contemporary, rejecting historical styles and traditional ornament in favor of straightforward forms. As its name suggests, the style evokes the imagery of the Midwestern prairie through its predominately horizontal form and integration with the landscape. The style was characterized by an emphasis on handsome details executed in wood, brick and stone and fine craftsmanship. Prairie-style buildings are generally characterized by broadly projecting eaves, low hip or gable roofs, powerful horizontal lines, and simple geometric shapes. Ribbon windows with wooden casements reinforce the style's horizontal theme which is sometimes further developed by dark wood stripping that continues the sill line around buildings. Plaster over wood frame construction allowed the style's fullest expression, but brick is also used as a building material, both alone and in combination with wood-frame construction. Residential Prairie-style buildings are frequently anchored around prominent flat chimneys and are spatially characterized by an open, free-flowing plan.

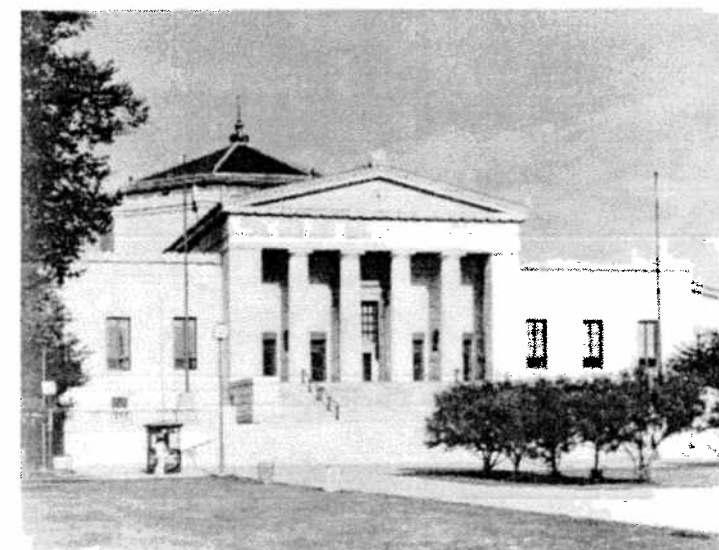
## JOHN G. SHEDD

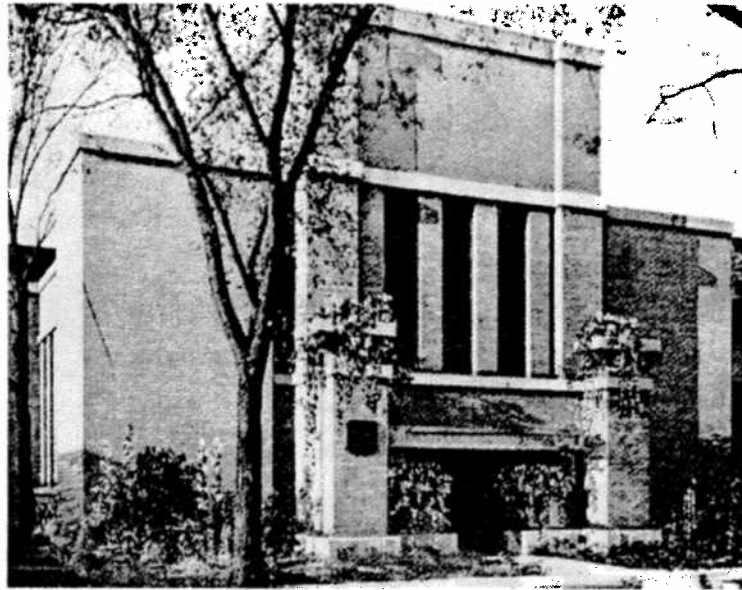
It was the practice of the West Park Commission to name public parks after notable Chicago business and civic leaders. Shedd Park's instigator and namesake, **John Graves Shedd** (1850-1926), was one of Chicago's important businessmen and philanthropists. Born on a farm in New Hampshire, he began working as a store clerk at the age of 17, but, feeling restrained by small-town New England life, decided to start over again in the West. He arrived in Chicago in 1872 during the City's reconstruction after the Fire of 1871, striving to work at "the biggest store in town." Within a year he was offered a job as a \$10-a-week clerk at Field and Leiter's store, arguably Chicago's leading dry-goods store. The hard-working Shedd caught Marshall Field's attention and he rose quickly through the ranks from stockboy to salesman to merchandise manager. In 1893 he was made a partner, and finally, in 1901, a vice-president. When Field died in 1906, Shedd succeeded him to the presidency. He became chairman of the board in 1922.

Like many of his fellow businessmen, Shedd gave generously to various causes and groups. Among his many gifts were \$125,000 to the YMCA, \$50,000 to the Art Institute, and \$50,000 to the YWCA. His most significant philanthropy was his gift of the Shedd Aquarium to the City

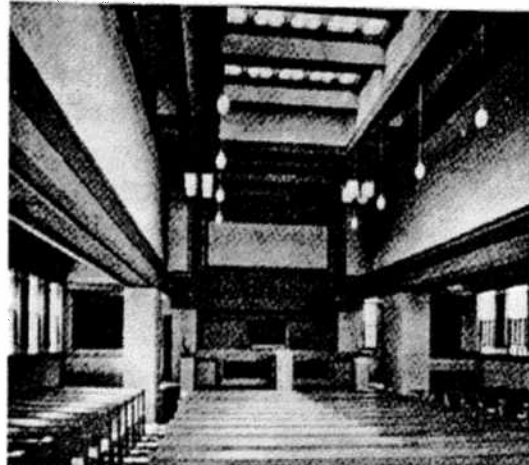


Above right : John Graves Shedd was instrumental in the formation of Shedd Park. Above left: A noted Chicago entrepreneur, he was president of Marshall Field and Company. Left: He lived for a time in this house at 2316 South Millard Avenue, less than a block from Shedd Park. Bottom: Shedd donated \$3 million to the South Park Board for the construction of Shedd Aquarium.





Top left : Architect William Drummond, the designer of the original 1917 Shedd Park Fieldhouse, was a master of the Prairie style. His notable designs in the Prairie School style include the First Congregational Church of Austin (top right and right); the Lorimer Memorial Baptist Church in the Greater Grand Crossing community area (bottom left); and his own residence in River Forest (bottom right).



of Chicago. Shedd donated \$3 million to the South Park Commission in 1924 for the construction of the world's first and largest aquarium. It was completed in 1930 on a prominent lakefront site south of Grant Park. The classically-inspired building, designed by the distinguished Chicago architectural firm of Graham, Anderson, Probst and White, was designed to harmonize with the adjacent Field Museum. Clad in cream-colored marble, it is covered with aquatic motifs inside and out.

## ARCHITECT WILLIAM EUGENE DRUMMOND

**William Eugene Drummond** (1876-1948), the architect of the original section of Shedd Park Fieldhouse, is regarded as one of the masters of the Prairie School of architecture, an innovative architectural style developed in Chicago and its suburbs. He was born in Newark, New Jersey, and came to Chicago in 1886 when he was ten years old. His family settled in the Austin neighborhood on Chicago's Far West Side, and he spent two years at the Austin High School. Drummond learned the building trades from his father who was a general contractor. Early in his life Drummond felt the desire to become an architect. He briefly attended the University of Illinois School of Engineering, but the financial burdens placed upon him there were too great, and he was forced to leave school after only one year. In 1899 he was hired as a draftsman by Frank Lloyd Wright in whose Oak Park office he remained until 1909.

Drummond served as chief draftsman and project manager for many of Wright's commissions during the avant-garde architect's development of the Prairie style, doing working drawings, designs and detailings, as well as supervising. The basic procedure followed in the office was for Wright to see the clients and do the basic design, while Drummond would do the detailing and the working drawings. Drummond is credited with the drawings for the Larkin Building in Buffalo, New York, and the Cheney, Isabel Roberts, Bradley and Hickox Houses.

After Wright closed his Oak Park studio in 1910, Drummond entered private practice where over the next two years he established himself as an excellent designer in the Prairie style. In 1912 he formed a partnership with Louis Guenzel (1869-1956) which lasted until 1915. Guenzel handled much of the business operations of the office, while Drummond concentrated on design, continuing to work in the Prairie style.

Most of Drummond's commissions throughout his career were small, mainly churches and residences. His early Prairie-style houses, built mainly in Chicago's nearby suburbs, are characterized by hard, crisp rectangular designs. Exterior textures are stuccoed plaster painted a buff color and emphasized by contrasting wood trim. Interiors contain a large central fireplace and the free-flowing space of the living-dining area typical of the Prairie style.

Drummond's most imaginative Prairie-style designs were produced shortly after leaving Wright's studio. His exceptional design for the First Congregational Church of Austin (5701 West Midway Park; built 1908) strongly reflects the influence of Wright's landmark 1906 Unity Temple in Oak Park with its cubic form and lack of traditional ornament. The River Forest Women's Club, designed by Drummond in 1913, is likewise very reminiscent of Unity Temple

and in plan is similar to the Shedd Park Fieldhouse. In 1914, by now in partnership with Louis Guenzel, Drummond again used the Prairie style for the Lorimer Memorial Baptist Church (7257 South St. Lawrence) on Chicago's South Side. The Shedd Park Fieldhouse was designed during this period.

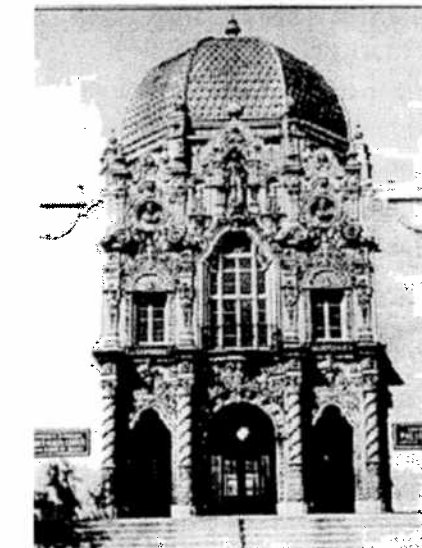
In the 1920s Drummond's work became primarily residential, and his style changed from the Prairie style to what can be loosely described as "English Cottage." He turned to this more conservative style in order to secure commissions. Much in the spirit of the Prairie style, however, his work continued to present a unified, interior space. A case in point is the 1928 River Forest Public Library, where he designed everything for the building, including furniture, fixtures, hardware and decorative details. Late in his career in 1931, Drummond won a competition to remodel the lobby of the Rookery Building. In his design Drummond returned to the Prairie style which he had earlier mastered.

Aside from his work as an architect, Drummond was involved with various town-planning activities throughout his life. The Como Orchards, a Utopian community planned to be built in Montana, was laid out in part under Drummond's supervision while he was with the Frank Lloyd Wright studio. Although the 1909 plan failed to be realized, Drummond gained experience in town planning at a critical point in his career. During his partnership with Guenzel, Drummond proposed a scheme for a group of faculty houses for Lake Forest College. In this plan, also never carried out, a group of Prairie-style buildings were symmetrically arranged in a horseshoe arrangement. In 1913 the Chicago City Club sponsored a competition for the development of a large plot of land within the Chicago city limits. In his plan, also not realized, Drummond proposed the city to be divided into quarter sections, each unit comprising an area which would act as a neighborhood or social center.

## ARCHITECTS MICHAELSEN AND ROGNSTAD

The architectural firm of Michaelsen and Rognstad designed the 1928 gymnasium addition to the Shedd Park Fieldhouse in a manner sensitive to the original building's Prairie style design. Christian S. Michaelsen (1888-1960) was born in Chicago, the son of a building contractor of Norwegian descent. He attended the public schools and received his first training in the building trades working with his father. In 1905 he began training as a draftsman in the office of Arthur Huen and then from 1910 to 1913 worked for Chicago's most prolific "society architect," Howard Van Doren Shaw. While in Shaw's employ, Michaelsen's previous experience in construction led the latter to work in the area of structural engineering for the office.

Sigurd Anton Rognstad (1892-1937) was born in Chicago. From the age of 18, Rognstad worked as a free-lance draftsman, and in 1915 he joined architect Frederick W. Perkins as a designer and a draftsman. In 1920 he formed a partnership with Michaelsen that would last 17 years. Michaelsen provided expertise in structural engineering and oversaw the business operations of the office; Rognstad was responsible for the interior and exterior stylistic designs of their work.



Architects Christian Michaelsen (top left) and Sigurd Rognstad (top right), the architects for the fieldhouse's 1928 gymnasium addition, were proficient in a wide variety of architectural styles. Their work is represented by the Austin Town Hall Park Fieldhouse (middle left); the West Park Commission Administration Building in Garfield Park (above right) and the On Leong Merchants' Association Building in Chinatown (bottom left).



In order to follow their mutual inclination toward monumental designs in historic styles, the firm of Michaelson and Rognstad concentrated their efforts on large scale projects intended for public use. Although unfamiliar with Oriental architecture, they undertook the remodeling of a number of restaurants in a "Chinese" style, as well as the design of the On Leong Merchants' Association Building (2216 South Wentworth; built 1928) a Chicago Landmark.

Michaelson and Rognstad also served as the architects for the West Park Commission from 1927 to 1929. This period was an especially productive one in the history of the West Park Commission, as the agency embarked upon an ambitious building program in its parks, thanks to the passage of a \$10,000,000 bond issue in 1927. Michaelson and Rognstad produced twelve distinctive buildings for the West Park Commission, including the Spanish Baroque Revival-style West Park Commission Administration Building in Garfield Park (100 North Central Park Avenue; built 1928) and the Georgian Revival-style Austin Town Hall Park Fieldhouse (5626 West Lake Street; built 1929).

## CRITERIA FOR DESIGNATION

According to the Municipal Code of Chicago (Sect. 2-120-620 and -630), the Commission on Chicago Landmarks has the authority to make a preliminary recommendation of landmark designation for a building, structure, object, or district if the Commission determines it meets two or more of the stated "criteria for landmark designation," as well as possesses a significant degree of its historic design integrity.

The following should be considered by the Commission on Chicago Landmarks in determining whether to recommend that the Shedd Park Fieldhouse be designated as a Chicago Landmark.

### ***Criterion 1: Critical Part of the City's History***

*Its value as an example of the architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social, or other aspect of the heritage of the City of Chicago, State of Illinois or the United States.*

- The Shedd Park Fieldhouse exemplifies the importance of Chicago's neighborhood parks, built in working-class neighborhoods for the city's large immigrant population, to the city's heritage.
- The Fieldhouse reflects the changing cultural attitudes toward the role of parks in Chicago during the early twentieth century, from a contemplative landscape devoted to passive recreation into a true community center with recreational and social uses accommodated by a new building type, the park "fieldhouse."

### ***Criterion 3: Important Person***

*Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the architectural, cultural, economic, historic, social or other aspects of the City of Chicago, State of Illinois, or the United States.*

- The fieldhouse and adjoining park are named for John G. Shedd, a noted Chicago entrepreneur and philanthropist. Shedd was president of Marshall Field and from 1906 to 1922 and donated \$3 million dollars to the South Park Board in 1924 for the construction of Shedd Aquarium, the world's first and largest aquarium.
- Shedd was responsible for the park which today bears his name, setting aside just over an acre of land in 1885 for development of what he originally proposed as a private park. In 1888 he was instrumental in having the land transferred to city for its eventual development as a public park.

### ***Criterion 4: Important Architecture***

*Its exemplification of an architectural type or style distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship.*

- The Shedd Park Fieldhouse was designed in the innovative Prairie style, an architectural style important in the history of Chicago and the United States, and is considered one of the best examples of early "modern" architecture in the Chicago Park District.
- The Shedd Park Fieldhouse is distinguished for its quality of detailing and craftsmanship in the Prairie style, including a gabled roof with extended eaves, horizontal bands of windows, a limestone stringcourse and lintels, and a roof pediment detailed by vertical woodwork.
- The Shedd Park Fieldhouse's 1928 gymnasium addition, handsomely designed in the Prairie style, blends sensitively with the design of the original building.
- The fieldhouse has a significant second-floor auditorium interior designed by Drummond and located in the 1917 building, detailed by brick walls and a ceiling open to the underside of the gabled roof sheathed by diagonal decking between the roof beams.

### ***Criterion 5: Important Architect***

*Its identification as the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose individual work is significant in the history or development of the City of Chicago, the State of Illinois, or the United States.*

- The original 1916-17 section of the Shedd Park Fieldhouse was designed by William Eugene Drummond, a Prairie School architect significant in the history of Chicago.
- Beginning as a draftsman in the employ of Frank Lloyd Wright and later in partnership with Louis Guenzel, Drummond is considered one of the City's most skilled designers in the Prairie School tradition, and was responsible for many significant Prairie style designs in and around Chicago, most notably the First Congregational Church of Austin and the Lorimer Memorial Baptist Church.

- The sensitively designed 1928 gymnasium addition to the fieldhouse was the work of the architectural firm of Michaelsen and Rognstad. Michaelsen and Rognstad worked deftly in a wide variety of architectural styles, producing such diverse designs as the Chinese-inspired On Leong Merchant's Association Building and the Spanish Baroque Revival style West Park Commission Administration Building.
- Michaelsen and Rognstad also were the architects for the West Park Commission from 1927 to 29, producing twelve significant buildings for the park commission, including large Revival-style fieldhouses for Humboldt, Garfield and Douglas Parks.

### ***Integrity Criteria***

*The integrity of the proposed landmark must be preserved in light of its location, design, setting, materials, workmanship and ability to express its historic community, architecture or aesthetic interest or value.*

The Shedd Park Fieldhouse possesses excellent physical integrity, displaying through its site, scale and overall design, its historic relationship to the South Lawndale community. Inappropriate changes to the building are few. Exterior changes to the fieldhouse include replacement of the building's original tile roof by asphalt shingles and placement of metal screens over all windows. Interior changes include the subdivision of the southeast corner of the first floor activities room for a director's office.

### **SIGNIFICANT HISTORICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES**

Whenever a building, structure, object, or district is under consideration for landmark designation, the Commission on Chicago Landmarks is required to identify the "significant historical and architectural features" of the property. This is done to enable the owners and the public to understand which elements are considered most important to preserve the historical and architectural character of the proposed landmark.

Based upon its evaluation of the Shedd Park Fieldhouse, the Commission recommends that the significant features be identified as:

- All exterior elevations of the fieldhouse, including rooflines, of both the original (1916-17) building and the 1928 gymnasium addition;
- The second-floor auditorium of the fieldhouse; and
- The first-floor lobby and staircase leading to the auditorium.



The Shedd Park Fieldhouse retains excellent physical integrity, as can be seen in this comparison of a c.1969 photograph of the southwest corner of the fieldhouse (top) with the southeast corner (bottom) taken in June 2003.

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### Illustrations

Department of Planning and Development, Landmarks Division: pp. 2, 9 (top & middle), 11 (top), 12, 13, 15 (bottom), 23 (bottom).

Chicago Park District, Special Collections: pp. 5, 7, 8 (top), 9 (bottom), 19 (upper left, upper right), 23 (top).

From *The Prairie School Review*: pp. 8 (bottom), 11 (bottom), 16 (upper left, top right, middle right, lower right).

Chicago Historic Resources Survey: pp. 15 (top left, middle left), 16 (lower left), 19 (middle right and left, lower left).

From *Chicago Portraits: Biographies of 250 Famous Chicagoans*: p.15 (upper right).

*The Commission on Chicago Landmarks, whose nine members are appointed by the Mayor, was established in 1968 by city ordinance. It is responsible for recommending to the City Council that individual buildings, sites, objects, or entire districts be designated as Chicago Landmarks, which protects them by law. The Commission is staffed by the Chicago Department of Planning and Development, 33 N. LaSalle St., Room 1600, Chicago, IL 60602, (312-744-3200) phone; (312-744-2958) TTY; (312-744-9140) fax; web site: <http://www.cityofchicago.org/landmarks>.*

*This Preliminary Summary of Information is subject to possible revision and amendment during the designation proceedings. Only language contained within the City Council's final landmark designation ordinance should be regarded as final.*



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